

# MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT

## ***PROTECTING WORKING FORESTLANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS***

The MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT is intended to encourage responsible non-industrial forest management and stewardship through hazardous fuels reduction, appropriate silviculture, regulatory relief and permit coordination, and integration of forest management with watershed restoration goals.

### **Components of the MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT:**

#### **Mattole Programmatic Timber EIR (PTEIR)**

- PTEIR for all non-industrial forestlands in the 189,000 acre Mattole basin. Timber management generally follows guidelines for Non-industrial Timber Management Plans (NTMPs). Practices would generally consist of a subset of the Forest Practice Rules which would allow for moderately-intensive management.
- Allowable silvicultural practices might include single tree and group selection, thinning, shelterwood with permanent retention, and other all-age management practices.
- Limitations might include harvest timelines, equipment limitations on steep slopes, size of openings, and retention standards.
- Fuels management will follow AB 2420 and Board of Forestry fuels exemption regulations.
- Inter-agency/landowner collaborative cumulative watershed effects analysis on a planning watershed scale in 12 Mattole planning watersheds (100% basin coverage)
- Iterative update process for PTEIR as watershed conditions change
- Agency coordination through Memorandum of Agreement and pre-consultation on PTEIR/PTHP development
- Programmatic Section 1600/1603 Agreement with Dept. of Fish and Game
- Basin-wide Erosion Control Plan, Watershed-wide Waste Discharge Requirements or sufficiency with the Waste Discharge Waiver under the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Habitat-based ESA/CESA programmatic or site-specific consultations
- Four to seven PTHP applications will be completed to establish the permitting process and demonstrate effective regulatory relief for non-industrial landowners

#### **Landscape-scale Hazardous Fuels Management**

- Complete 60 property-wide hazardous fuels assessments in high-priority treatment areas, prepare exemptions/PTHPs for ten sites
- Use public and private sector funds to complete fuels treatments across areas identified in the *Lower* and *Upper Mattole Fire Plans*
- Establish fuels treatment prescriptions that improve habitat for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species

#### **Mattole Coho Salmon Recovery Planning**

- Guided by stakeholder and scientific input, develop site-specific project components for inclusion in the statewide *Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon*
- Incorporate coho salmon recovery practices into timber planning and permitting

#### **Multi-party Forest Health Monitoring**

- Monitoring requirements coordinated with basin-wide efforts

- Work with Dept. of Forest and Dept. of Fish and Game, landowners and other stakeholders to define monitoring objectives, select protocols, and design monitoring strategy
- Use KRIS-Mattole database to track, display and disseminate data, analysis and reports
- Landowner training in data collection and interpretation to conduct self-audit of practices
- Create the *Mattole Data Management Framework* to establish data entry, update, and quality control procedures for data collection, storage and management.
- Monitoring data will be used to create 5-year updates to the PTEIR and Mattole coho recovery strategy.

#### Research and Evaluation

- Use data and management prescriptions developed for the Mattole Watershed PTEIR to analyze the potential economic costs and benefits of meeting targeted management objectives including sustainable forest management, fuels reduction, habitat conservation, and stream restoration.
- Estimate the volume and economic value of forest goods and services generated for each prescription including standing inventory, forest productivity, fuel load reduction, carbon storage, water retention and quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation.
- Estimate the potential reduction in regulatory overhead for projects implementing prescriptions identified in the Mattole Watershed PTEIR. Compile economic data on cost savings under permit coordination vs. individual permit applications.

#### Statewide Dissemination of Watershed-based Timber Permitting Practices

- Document PTEIR, fuels management and coho recovery strategy development to demonstrate successful approaches to watershed, timber and fisheries management.
- Develop publication and offer four trainings throughout the state to landowners and communities for broader adoption of the watershed-based approach to timber management.

## **Timeline and Project Phases, MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT:**

Mattole Forest Future Project partners will undertake the following tasks between 2005-2008.

### **Step 1: Project Start-Up (Fall 2005-Spring 2006)**

1. Finalize project scope through discussions with landowners, stakeholders, project partners, and regulatory agencies.
2. Assemble Forest Futures Steering Committee to advise the Mattole Restoration Council in the implementation of the MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT, consisting of nine members (others may be added as interests are identified). Quarterly meetings of the Steering Committee will provide advisory oversight to the project:
  - a. Mattole Restoration Council board member
  - b. Buckeye Conservancy representative
  - c. Institute for Sustainable Forestry representative
  - d. Sustainable Conservation representative
  - e. Mattole large non-industrial landowner
  - f. Mattole small non-industrial landowner
  - g. California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection
  - h. North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
  - i. California Dept. of Fish and Game
3. Execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Mattole Restoration Council and all agencies involved in regulation of fuels management, forestry and timber operations (including the Resources Agency and CalEPA). The MOA shall set forth a process by which a PTEIR, related programmatic permits, PTHPs, Mattole-specific Coho Recovery Strategy, Mattole Data Management Framework and related monitoring plans will be completed. The MOA will provide guidelines on the types of silvicultural and management prescriptions that will be analyzed within the PTEIR. The MOA will describe agency commitments to a planning watershed scale CWE analysis to be completed in conjunction with local stakeholders. The MOA will contain a clear statement of project goals and describe how the end-products will be used. The MOA will detail roles, responsibilities, timeline and approval pathways for these documents.

### **Step 2: Public Involvement and CWE Analysis Development (Spring 2006-Fall 2006)**

1. Hold two public meetings to inform Mattole residents, landowners and stakeholders about the MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT. Meetings will be held to solicit input on the project scope and goals.
2. In each of 12 Mattole planning watersheds, hold neighborhood meetings to identify cumulative watershed impacts, fisheries recovery and related issues. Existing data will be presented, and opportunities for local input on existing data will be provided. An inter-agency team will attend all meetings as full participants in the CWE analysis and identification process. Neighborhood-scale maps will be provided for all meetings to facilitate site-specific problem identification and to point out areas where timber harvest, fuels management or restoration forestry might occur. All data collected will be included in the PTEIR's environmental analysis section, Mattole watershed Coho Recovery Strategy, and to bolster programmatic permit applications. Participants will also discuss forest health monitoring and recovery strategies for the basin.

### **Step 3: PTEIR Development (Summer 2006-Spring 2007)**

1. Draft a PTEIR for non-industrial lands in the Mattole River watershed. Work with Steering Committee, stakeholders, and relevant resource agencies to implement CEQA/permitting approach around silvicultural parameters defined in the MOA. Use data and analyses gathered in Step 2 to create Planning Watershed-scale cumulative effects analyses for the 12 planning watersheds within the basin.
2. Draft other programmatic permits, including a programmatic Section 1600/1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement, and Erosion Control Plan to comply with the regional Waste Discharge Requirements, or create an exemption for PTHPs filed under this PTEIR within the Waste Discharge Waiver.
3. For site-specific permits and requirements (ESA/CESA, archaeology, and rare plants), provide guidance to PTHP submitters for compliance, or explore programmatic/basin-wide compliance opportunities.
4. Using input from neighborhood meetings, create the Mattole Forest Health Monitoring Guide and the Mattole Data Management Framework to describe how forestry project will be monitored to ensure compliance with the PTEIR and related permits through a landowner-driven, transparent, monitoring process. The Guide will be a methods manual for forest and watershed health monitoring. The Framework will specify monitoring questions, sampling strategies and quality assurance procedures.
5. Assemble the Mattole Coho Recovery Strategy, a compilation of prioritized site-specific project descriptions to recover Mattole coho salmon. Submit the Strategy to the California Fish and Game Commission and Dept. of Fish and Game for formal approval or inclusion with the statewide Strategy.
6. Using the guidance provided in the MOA, submit for approval the PTEIR, programmatic permits and related documents to relevant agencies.

### **Step 4: Implement Watershed-Scale Timber Permitting Approach (Spring 2007-Spring 2008)**

1. Complete 60 on-site hazardous fuels assessments. If merchantable byproducts exist, provide landowner with information on treatment costs and revenues under the PTEIR or an existing hazardous fuels exemption (i.e. AB 2420, structure exemption, or emergency exemption).
2. Working with both small and larger non-industrial Mattole landowners, submit between four and seven PTHP applications to CDF, and related permits to relevant agencies.
3. Complete hazardous fuels reduction projects within the *Lower* and *Upper Mattole Fire Plan* priority treatment areas.
4. Coordinate PTHP approval and use of programmatic permits with landowners, agencies and stakeholders to demonstrate the use of the PTEIR.

### **Step 5: Research and Statewide Dissemination (Fall 2007-Spring 2008)**

1. Conduct economic research and create silvicultural yield projections to determine the costs and benefits of watershed-scale timber permitting and resource management.
2. Document the MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT approach for statewide dissemination. Publish a research report that documents the costs, benefits, and projected uses of the PTEIR.
3. Conduct four workshops statewide to train local stakeholders in the use of programmatic timber permitting approaches.

## Step 6: Adaptive Management (Spring 2008-Summer 2013).

1. Collect monitoring data according to the Monitoring Guide and the Mattole Data Management Framework. Input data into the KRIS-Mattole database, which will be made available on the internet.
2. Use watershed and forest monitoring data to create an update to the PTEIR and programmatic permits as needed between 2008-2013.

**Related Efforts and Planning/Assessment Documents:** CalEPA and the Resources Agency created the *Mattole River Watershed Assessment Report* in 2003. This document will serve as the basis for PTEIR development. Other efforts, datasets, and plans will be integrated:

- *Mattole Watershed Restoration Plan* and related implementation projects
- Upper Mattole River Parkway
- *Lower and Upper Mattole Fire Plans*
- *Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon*
- Buckeye Forest Project *Report* and Workshop Notes
- *Mattole TMDL Technical Support Document*
- High resolution ortho-rectified air photos (2004)
- Historic air photos (1942, 1965, 1984, 2000)
- Sediment source mapping/inventory, 30% of basin
- Stream surveys, riparian habitat surveys, 70% of basin
- In-stream sediment monitoring, 8% of basin
- Sustainable Conservation's Humboldt County *Partners in Restoration* permit coordination program

**Partners:** The MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT is only possible because of support from a diverse set of stakeholders. Private landowner support and regulatory agency commitment to project goals is critical to success. Partners will include landowner organizations, statewide conservation groups, land trusts, relevant regulatory agencies, and numerous cooperative private landowners.

**Financing Mattole Watershed Forest Futures:** The MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT is a multi-partner effort, and will be financed through a variety of private, local, state and federal sources. It is estimated to cost approximately \$1.4 million. Approximately \$500,000 will be raised from non-state sources. The MATTOLE FOREST FUTURES PROJECT places a special emphasis on private-sector and market-oriented funding sources to leverage limited state and federal resources.

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